

Message Text

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UNCLAS BELFAST 176

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: SPIRAL OF VIOLENCE FOLLOWS LONG KESH BREAKOUT

REF: BELFAST 175

1. AT LEAST TEN PERSONS HAVE DIED VIOLENTLY IN NORTHERN IRELAND SINCE REPUBLICAN DETAINEE HUGH CONEY WAS SHOT DEAD IN ATTEMPT AT ESCAPE FROM LONG KESH MAZE PRISON EARLY NOV. 6. TWO SOLDIERS KILLED BY GUNFIRE IN AMBUSH TWO MORE BY BOOBY TRAP BOMB. ONE MAN KILLED BY TROOPS REPORTEDLY AS HE ATTEMPTING ARMED HI-JACK OF TRUCK IN CATHOLIC AREA BELFAST AND THERE FIVE MEN SHOT, FOUR OF THEM CATHOLICS IN APPARENTLY SECTARIAN ATTACKS. NUMEROUS OTHER INDIVIDUALS WOUNDED BY GUNFIRE OVER WEEKEND AND PROVISIONAL IRA CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIVE EXPLOSIONS IN SHOPS CLOSED AREA DOWNTOWN BELFAST NOV. 9. PROTESTANT ACTION GROUP CITING SOME ASSASSINATIONS AS RETALIATION FOR ENGLISH PUB BOMBINGS. THERE REPORTED GUN BATTLE BETWEEN MEMBERS OFFICIAL AND PROVISIONAL IRA IN WHICH TWO MEN WOUNDED NOV. 10.

2. HARDSHIP CONDITIONS CONTINUE AT LONG KESH MAZE PRISON. MANY INMATES SICK WITH INFLUENZA. LOYALIST ULSTER VOLUNTEER
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FORCE AND RED HAND COMMANDO CONVICTED PRISONERS THREATENING

HUNGER STRIKE "TO DEATH" OVER CONDITIONS. STORMONT AUTHORITIES ANNOUNCED SOME LOYALISTS WOULD BE HOUSED IN REBUILT ACCOMMODATION VERY SOON.

3. PUBLIC CRITICISM OF POLITICIANS AND SECURITY FORCES GROWING. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) UNDER CONTINUING PRESSURE TO CALL FOR COMMUNITY COOPERATION WITH POLICE. IN FIRST MAJOR SPEECH RECENT MONTHS NOV. 9 BRIAN FAULKNER CRITICIZED BOTH SDLP SHORTSIGHTEDNESS AND UNITED UNIONIST POLICIES THAT COULD PUSH ULSTER TOWARD INDEPENDENCE. SOME CATHOLICS SEE MURDERS THEIR CO-RELIGIONISTS AS TOLERATED BY SECURITY FORCES AND CLAIM PERMISSIVENESS BEGAN WHEN AUTHORITIES DID NOT RPT NOT INTERVENE IN ULSTER WORKERS COUNCIL STRIKE LAST MAY. ALONG WITH THIS ARE ENCOURAGING SIGNS, MOSTLY REPORTED BY AUTHORITIES THAT PROVISIONAL IRA AS ULTIMATE CAUSE SECTARIAN ASSASSINATIONS EXPERIENCING INCREASED DISAFFECTION FROM COMMUNITY.

4. NO RPT NO PROFOUND COMPARISON ATTEMPTED BUT IT APPEARS FROM HERE NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION ATTRACTING MORE ATTENTION EXTERNALLY. BBC-4 RADIO PANEL EVENING NOV. 8 WHICH ANSWERED QUESTIONS FROM LISTENERS LED OFF WITH QUESTIONS (A) SHOULD ENGLISH TROOPS REMAIN IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND (B) SHOULD DEATH SENTENCE BE REINTRODUCED FOR TERRORIST OFFENSES. IT NOTEWORTHY THAT WHILE ALL FOUR PANELISTS TOOK VIEW NORTHERN IRELAND INTEGRAL PART U.K. THREE BELIEVED SOME TIME-TABLE FOR WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. ONLY ONE PANELIST BELIEVED STRONGLY DEATH PENALTY SHOULD BE APPLIED TO TERRORISTS. HE WARMLY APPLAUDED BY STUDIO AUDIENCE. SIMILAR THEMES FOLLOWED ON SUNDAY NOON "WEEKEND WORLD" ITV SPECIAL. LOYALIST POLITICIANS LIKELY TO REACT WITH HOSTILITY TO DUBLIN IRISH TIMES FRONT PAGE ARTICLE NOVEMBER 11 PREDICTING IRISH MINISTERS WOULD SEEK ASSISTANCE EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS IN PRESSING PRIME MINISTER WILSON TO ASSUME FIRMER ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND SETTLEMENT.
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